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Citizens Research Council
of Michigan

The citizen and the city
government

Detroit

1917

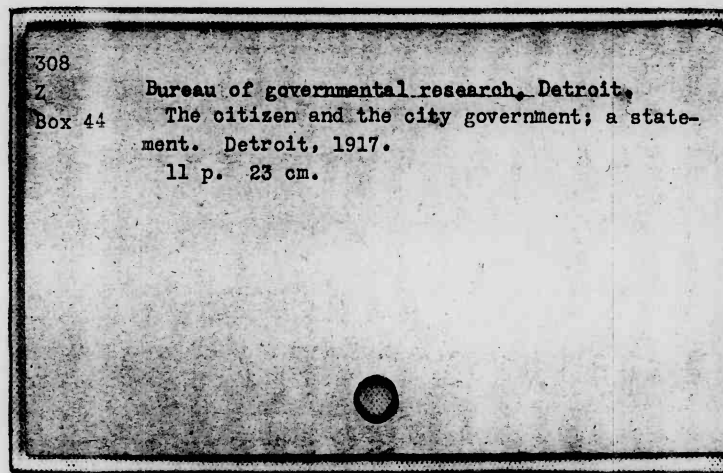
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The Citizen and the City Government

*A Statement by the Detroit Bureau of
Governmental Research*

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Box 44

100 GRISWOLD STREET
DETROIT, MICH.
July, 1917

The Detroit Bureau of Governmental Research was organized March 22, 1916:

1. To get things done for Detroit through co-operation with persons who are in office, by increasing efficiency and eliminating waste, and
2. To serve as an independent, non-partisan agency for keeping citizens informed about the city's business.

TRUSTEES

Otto Kirchner, President
Emory W. Clark, Vice-President
Sidney T. Miller, 2nd Vice-President
Ralph Stone, Secretary
Joseph J. Crowley
Edward H. Doyle
Norval A. Hawkins
Chas. C. Jenks
Eugene W. Lewis
Homer Warren
Detroit Trust Co., Treas.

STAFF

Lent D. Upson, Director
Arch M. Mandel
H. S. Morse
Henry Steffens, Jr.
M. M. Vance

The Citizen and the City Government

Next year (1917-18), the City of Detroit will spend over \$31,000,000.

The city will promote the health, education, and safety of 870,000 people living in 81 square miles of territory, and owning over a billion dollars of taxable property.

To find out how Detroit carries out this complex and technical task, and to keep in touch with what more than 10,000 city employes are doing, and how each tax dollar is spent, is more than any one citizen can undertake. Yet, it is the underlying theory of popular government that each citizen should so inform himself.

A Citizen Agency About a year ago (March 22, 1916), the Detroit Bureau of Governmental Research was organized as the representative of busy citizens in keeping track of tax dollars. Instead of focusing its attention upon elections and matters of a political character, the Trustees of the Detroit Bureau of Governmental Research assumed that citizens should share with public officials responsibility for knowing the needs of the city and for adopting the machinery of government to meet those needs in the most efficient way. Instead of hostile criticism, the Bureau of Governmental Research has sought to offer critical study and constructive planning on behalf of the citizens whom it represents. This has been done in two ways:

*By co-operating with public officers in their efforts to increase efficiency and eliminate waste, and
By serving as a non-partisan agency for keeping citizens informed about the city's business.*

It has often been assumed that public officials are not disposed to accept the co-operation of citizens in their efforts to understand and to solve the difficulties of administration.

The reason why public officials so frequently resent citizen interference is that individual citizens and organizations often presume to offer criticism and propose remedies without having first acquainted themselves with the details of the problems attacked.

In Detroit the public officers have been convinced that the program of this Bureau is not one of mere fault-finding, but is based upon a sincere desire of citizens to assume their proper responsibility for understanding difficulties, locating defects, and removing handicaps. These officials have a sincere desire to administer public affairs so as to benefit the public and to redound to the credit of the officers concerned. And these officers have been not only willing but glad to accept the co-operation which the Bureau of Governmental Research has offered.

Organization The general supervision of the Detroit Bureau of Governmental Research rests with a board of ten trustees who, with one exception, were the original incorporators of the organization. This board is responsible for the policies and the financing of the Bureau.

The first essential of Bureau work is that it be free from partisan politics. To this end it is especially provided in the by-laws that "every trustee who shall hold or be a candidate for public office, or accept any public employment shall automatically cease to be such trustee."

Further, the by-laws provide that the organization shall take no part in "promoting or defeating the election or appointment to public office, or the employment of any person or persons in a public position."

The present membership of the Board of Trustees is as follows:

Otto Kirchner, President
Emory W. Clark, Vice-President
Sidney T. Miller, Second Vice-President.
Ralph Stone, Secretary
Joseph J. Crowley
Edward H. Doyle
Norval A. Hawkins
Chas. C. Jenks
Eugene W. Lewis
Homer Warren

Staff The Detroit Bureau of Governmental Research has employed a staff of persons familiar with the different branches of government, for the purpose of co-operating with public officers in every possible way. This staff is supplemented by men of particular specialized training, as occasion requires. The trustees frankly realize the possible difficulties of such co-operation and have endeavored to secure men with tact as well as ability and training. That this effort has been successful is indicated by an excerpt from the Mayor's annual address to the Council Jan. 9, 1917, in which he said: "This organization (The Detroit Bureau of Governmental Research) has in its employ men of ability and experience, who, in a dignified and unpretentious manner, are studying our governmental system and offering suggestions for increasing its efficiency."

The permanent staff of the Bureau is as follows:

Lent D. Upson, Director, B. A., M. A. (Univ. of Wis.), Ph. D. (Univ. of Ill.), Training School for Public Service of the New York Bureau of Municipal Research 1911-12; In charge, Municipal Exhibit of Cincinnati, 1912; Director, Dayton Bureau of Municipal Research, 1912-15; Secretary Dayton Citizens' Relief Committee, 1913; Assistant Director, New York Bureau of Municipal Research, 1914; Executive Secretary, National Cash Register Company, 1915-16; Advisory Editorial Board, "National Municipal Review;" Lecturer in Municipal Administration, University of Michigan.

Arch. M. Mandel, B. A. (College of City of New York); taught in New York City schools, 1909-10; Field Agent, U. S. Tariff Board, 1911; Training School for Public Service of the New York Bureau of Municipal Research, 1912; Assistant School Editor, "New York Globe," 1913; Dayton Bureau of Municipal Research, 1913-16.

H. S. Morse, S. B. (Mass. Inst. of Tech.); Asst. Instructor, M. I. T., 1903-1904; Resident Engineer, U. S. Reclamation Service, 1904-1908; Resident Engineer, Louisville (Ky.) Sewerage Commission, 1908-1912; Principal Assistant Engineer in charge of sewers, City of Cincinnati, 1912-14; Director, Cincinnati Bureau of Municipal Research, 1914-16.

Henry Steffens, Jr. B. C. S. (New York Univ.); Commercial Accounting, 1910-13; Milwaukee Bureau of Municipal Research, 1913-1914; Minneapolis Bureau of Municipal Research, 1914-1916.

M. M. Vance, B. S. in Economics (Univ. of Pa.); Post graduate work (Yale Univ.), 1913-1914; North American Civic League for Immigrants, 1913-1914; Asst. Mng'r. Standard Oil Co. of New York at Semarang, Java, 1914-1916.

Methods In common with other organizations of a similar character, it has been the method of the Bureau to study carefully the operating conditions of the several departments. A report of these conditions, either written or verbal, is placed before the head of the department and the Mayor, with suggestions for improvement, when necessary. In a carefully prepared

report on any subject, questions of fact need not and should not be matters of difference. Deductions from facts, however, are easily matters of personal opinion. In reports dealing with important and technical subjects, the opportunity for such differences of opinion is clearly recognized. For this reason, every effort has been made to avoid categorical solutions of the questions raised. Rather an attempt has been made to indicate conditions and problems, and suggest solutions which have proven successful in communities of similar size and conditions.

Work Done However, surveys and reports are of little good unless they get results. Therefore, the most important work of the Bureau has been co-operating with public officers in getting results. In this co-operation the present city officers have been most fair and encouraging. Mayor Marx, City Controller Engel, Commissioner of Public Works Fenkell, and the officials of the Board of Education have been particularly generous with time and thought, and the largest part of the Bureau's work has been done in these three departments and has been made possible through their co-operation. In addition, nearly a dozen other departments have invited the Bureau to help them. But any improvements secured belong to the progressive officials who assume responsibility for them, and not to an organization which may have been only one of several factors in bringing improvements about.

It is fair to say, however, that during the past year the following matters have claimed a share of the Bureau's interest: Small Board of Estimates; City Budget Procedure; Control of City Revenue;

Control of City Automobiles; State Budget Legislation; Business Manager for Board of Education; School Janitors and Engineers; Maintenance of Board of Education Property; Sewers; Sewer Specifications; Street Cleaning and Refuse Collection; DeQuindre Street Grade Separation; Grade Separation Bureau; Ford Highway; Location of the House of Correction; City Planning; School Board Purchasing; Police Records; Food Inspection, etc.

A Work Program In conjunction with the public officers of Detroit, many organizations and individuals are working to raise the local government to a high degree of effectiveness. Governmental methods are constantly changing matters which may reflect the best practice today and be obsolete tomorrow. Some of the matters which will no doubt receive attention in the near future from one or more of the agencies mentioned are: Further improved budget procedure; accrual of all revenues to the city treasury, city accounting methods; detailed expense accounting; erection of school buildings and employment of architects; methods of purchasing, storing, and distributing city supplies; methods of purchasing school sites; powers and methods of the City Plan Commission; street cleaning and refuse removal; methods of street construction; garbage disposal; organization and methods of the Board of Health; standard specifications for public purchases; re-standardization of salaries and grades; pay-roll accounting, prison farm, etc.

Financial Statement The financial statement of the Bureau for the period from April 7, 1916, to April 30, 1917, is as follows:

Receipts

Subscriptions.....	\$41,213.78
Interest earned.....	289.36
Services.....	290.00
(Work done for other organizations)	
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	\$41,793.14

Disbursements

Furniture and fixtures.....	965.06
(For desks, tables, type-writers, adding machine, mimeograph, etc., in addition to equipment donated by the Detroit Trust Company, and an automobile donated by Mr. N. A. Hawkins.)	
Books and magazines.....	220.13
Insurance.....	20.00
Miscellaneous expense.....	312.34
Postage.....	257.09
(For office mail and three bulletins)	
Printing.....	86.50
(For three bulletins)	
Repairs to and decoration of office.....	323.23
Rent.....	180.00
Survey of Detroit Public Works	2,552.60
(Paid to New York Bureau of Municipal Research)	
Special services.....	191.87
(Miscellaneous services in addition to audit donated by Hawkins, Gies & Co.)	
Salary of clerks.....	3,129.32
Salary of executives.....	16,665.85
(For Director, General Investigator, Engineer, Accountant and Junior Accountant.)	
Stationery and office supplies	1,138.97
Traveling expenses.....	566.18
(Transportation to New York to secure special survey; to New York for Street Cleaning Conference; to New York for Convention of National Education Association; to Kansas City for Convention of School Superintendents; to Lansing on State budget; to Lansing on grade separation, etc.)	
Telephone and telegraph.....	149.42
	<hr/>
	\$26,758.56

Excess of receipts over disbursements..... 15,034.58

Consisting of:

Cash on hand 200.00
 Cash in bank 4,834.58
 x Certificates of deposit... 10,000.00

\$15,034.58

x Accrued interest from Jan.
 19, 1917 not handled

May 11, 1917.

Detroit Trust Company,
 Treasurer,
 Detroit, Michigan.
 Gentlemen:

We have made an audit of the books of the Detroit Bureau of Governmental Research, covering the period from April 7, 1916, to April 30, 1917, and we certify that the statement of Receipts and Disbursements herewith submitted, is true, and in accordance with the books.

Respectfully,
 HAWKINS, GIES & CO.

Other Bureaus The idea of the Bureau of Governmental Research and its relation to public affairs is not new; and is analogous to the efficiency organization found in nearly every large private business.

Since the establishment of the New York Bureau of Municipal Research in 1906, similar citizen agencies for promoting and keeping good government have been established and are in actual operation in the following cities:

Akron (O.).....Bureau of Municipal Research
 Baltimore.....Bureau of State and Municipal Research
 Chicago.....Bureau of Public Efficiency
 Cincinnati.....Bureau of Municipal Research
 Columbus (O.).....Ohio Institute for Public Service
 Dayton.....Bureau of Research
 Denver.....Civic and Legislative Bureau of the Denver Civic and Commerce Association
 Detroit.....Bureau of Governmental Research

Haverhill (Mass.)...Bureau of Municipal Research
 Milwaukee.....Citizens' Bureau of Municipal Efficiency
 Minneapolis.....Bureau of Municipal Research of the Civic and Commerce Association
 New York City.....Bureau of Municipal Research
 New York City.....Institute for Public Service
 Oakland (Cal.).....Tax Association of Alameda County
 Petersburg (Va.)...Bureau of Governmental Research
 Philadelphia.....Bureau of Municipal Research
 Rochester.....Bureau of Municipal Research
 San Francisco.....Bureau of Governmental Research
 Springfield (Mass.)..Bureau of Municipal Research
 St. Joseph (Mo.)...Civic Commissioner of the Commerce Club

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**END OF
TITLE**